

Hayes, Katherine

From: JoannaCoop@aol.com
Sent: Monday, March 23, 2009 10:40 AM
To: Friis, John
Subject: NEEDED Testimony - Bill #1142

To Whom it may concern:

I am writing to urge you **not** to support the "An Act Concerning Relief of State Mandates On School Districts" Raised Bill 1142. The policy change that is included to reverse "the burden of proof" to the "party that requests a hearing" is outrageous. If this bill is passed I believe it will significantly impact those with disabilities in our state in a negative way. Essentially it will turn IDEA on its head.

Remind yourselves that as elected officials, you are placed in your position as lawmakers by the people who voted for you to essentially represent their interests. The elected individual acting as a voice of the many is the burden - and the implied act of democracy is majority rules. However, in today's politics as a profession - the vocal minority - often slick and acting with an insiders road map - can out maneuver the most needy of the states constituents. The special needs students define that group.

The lives of the parents with special needs children are under siege in so many ways. We work, we hope, we pray for our actions to make a difference in our children's lives. We need to have faith that decency and the public trust will shape the decisions of our elected officials to pass laws intended to provide a fair and just playing field, especially true relative to the supporting role that education plays in shaping their very fragile lives.

This move to place the burden of proof was written by an amoral individual or individuals - an insider without a shred of compassion for the defenseless children it attacks. This move was last minute and purposeful, and intended to neuter IDEA. **DO NOT ACCEPT IT.**

As a parent of a special needs child, I will do everything in my power and energy to unveil the voting record for this bill. I will publish through every blog and email chain that I can, to spread the names of those who supported it. We the people - the parents of special needs children - will begin to vote as a block. And we will strike against those who oppose the very principles of justice. It is insane that the defenseless should need protection from those put in the position of responsibility to provide it.

Sincerely,

Joanna Cooper

A Good Credit Score is 700 or Above. See yours in just 2 easy steps!